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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Sixth periodic reports of States parties due in 2017

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

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List of abbreviations

ARM	Army of the Republic of Macedonia
CCA	Conditional cash assistance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHT	Combating human trafficking
CHT and IM	Combating human trafficking and illegal migration
CPD	Commission for Protection against Discrimination
CPCVWDV	Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence
HIFM	Health Insurance Fund of the Republic of Macedonia
ISA	Institute for Social Activities
IM	Illegal migration
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MH	Ministry of Health
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MBPS	Minimum basic package of services
NC	National Coordinator
NAP	National Action Plan
OMRB	Office for Management of the Registry of Births
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RHS	Reproduction Health Strategy
REF	Roma Educational Fund
RIC	Roma Information Center
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SOP	Standard operational procedures
SW	Social Welfare

SWC	Social work center
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VHT	Victims of human trafficking

Introduction

1. The Republic of Macedonia hereby submits the sixth periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women pursuant to the obligations originating from Article 18 of the Convention.

2. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in cooperation with the competent ministries of Republic of Macedonia, drafted an Operational Program, which contains the areas for which the Committee expressed its concern and indicated recommendations to overcome the same. At the same time, the information in the Operational Program helped in the process of drafting the sixth periodic report of the Republic of Macedonia on said Convention.

3. For the drafting of the Report, a questionnaire was also made, which was delivered to all relevant institutions and the civil sector, and which contained questions for collecting data on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. In cooperation with the UN-Women Office, a workshop was held in order to provide information and data required to draft the Report. Consultation meetings were also held, attended by representatives of the relevant ministries, institutions, representatives of the local self-government units and representatives of the civil sector who contributed to the drafting of the Report.

4. The report contains all amendments performed in the reporting period connected to legal regulation and progress in the social and economic life in terms of achieving equality among men and women for the period between 2013 and the end of 2016.

Part I

Article 1

Reply to Recommendations No. 11 and 13 (a), (c)

5. The Republic of Macedonia, in the combined fourth and fifth report,[1] indicated which laws define gender-based "discrimination against women". Gender equality and the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men are part of the applicable legal regulations of the Republic of Macedonia. Thus, the Law on Equal Opportunities of Men and Women comprehensively treats the issue of gender equality and protection against gender-based discrimination. Moreover, attention to this issue is paid in a number of other laws, especially in the area of criminal, family, and labour legislation that regulate the prohibition of discrimination in certain domains and promote the equality principle.

6. The 2012 Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men stipulates an explicit prohibition of all forms of discrimination, the level of harmonization of domestic and European legislation[2] has been upgraded and further regulation of certain provisions by adopting bylaws has been implemented, which will improve the practical implementation of the law at the central and local levels.

[1] Reviewed by the Committee on 21 February 2013.

[2] The following directives have been transposed: Directive 2000/113/EC on equal treatment in the field of employment; 2002/73/EC on the principle of equal treatment of men and women referring to access to jobs, education level and promotion, and working conditions; and 2004/113/EC on access to goods and services.

7. There is ongoing implementation of the initiative to amend the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, through which the basis for discrimination definition will be expanded. This activity was preceded by conducting an analysis and assessment of the implementation of the Law so far, which was carried out by the academic community, state institutions, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD), and the NGO sector. A new law is expected to be adopted in 2017. In order to provide greater accessibility to the mechanisms for protection against discrimination, a free-of-charge mobile application for submitting complaints, which is already operational, was also prepared.

Article 2

Reply to Recommendations No. 11, No. 13 (b), (c) and (d), No. 15, No. 17 and No. 21 (a)

8. The implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Men and Women[3] by the entities responsible for establishing equal opportunities of women and men at the national and local levels was the reason to adopt amendments to this Law.[4] That created a legal basis to adopt bylaws that will provide successful implementation of the foreseen legal solutions.

9. The following bylaws were adopted:

(a) Rulebook on the form and content of the annual report on the results from the application of the special measures for establishing equal opportunities of men and women and the manner of implementation of the special measure implementation plan;

(b) Rulebook on the form and content of the report on the work of the coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men in local government units;

(c) Rulebook on the form and content of the report on the work of the coordinator and the deputy coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men in the state administration bodies;[5]

(d) Rulebook on analysis of contents of the curricula, programs, and textbooks in terms of promotion of equal opportunities for women and men.[6]

10. Initiatives to incorporate the equal opportunities principle, pursuant to the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, resulted in integration of gender mainstreaming in the laws, bylaws, and internal acts in the area of internal affairs. Incorporation of gender mainstreaming was also performed in the following acts: Law on Internal Affairs, Article 8; Law on Police, Article 96; Police Code of Ethics, Article 58; Collective Agreement of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), Article 76 and Article 77; Decree on the Uniform and the Emblems of the Police, Article 28 and 33; Rulebook on Training in MoI-Article 2; Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure of Achieving a Career System of the Officials in the MoI, Article 6; Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure of Assessment of the Authorized Officer, the Content of the Report on the Performed Assessment, Assessment Form and Manner of Keeping Records, Article 2; Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure of Selection and Choosing of Persons To Be Employed in the MoI, Article 3.

[3] Official Gazette No. 6/2012, dated 13 January 2012.
[4] Official Gazette No.166 dated 12 November 2014.
[5] Official Gazette No. 46 dated 23 March 2015.
[6] Official Gazette No.125 dated 24 July 2015.

11. Article 23(a) paragraph 5 of the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection, which refers to vulnerable persons with special needs, stipulates that, in assessing the application for asylum, it is necessary to take into consideration the forms of gender-specific persecution. Intention of such and similar legal provisions provide a clear position on combating discrimination on any grounds, including gender-based discrimination.

12. In order to prevent and protect against psychological and sexual harassment at the workplace, i.e., the place of work, and providing healthy working environment, the Law on Protection against Harassment at the Workplace[7] was adopted in 2013. This law governs the rights, obligations, and liabilities of the employers and employees relating to psychological and sexual harassment at the workplace, and the measures and procedures for protection against harassment at the workplace.

13. Pursuant to the Law on Protection against Harassment at the Workplace, the employer is obliged to inform his employees on the prohibition of conducting harassment at the workplace, the obligations about the prohibition of harassment at the workplace, and the manner of recognition and the options for protection.

14. Undertaking measures directed towards prevention and protection of domestic violence victims, directed towards respecting human rights and freedoms, life, personal integrity, non-discrimination and gender equality, is provided in the Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence.[8] This law defines the responsibilities of the institutions and associations, their mutual coordination and cooperation in order to prevent domestic violence and provide protection to the victims. Pursuant to the new law, multisectoral teams at the local level have been established that work on protection and forwarding the cases of domestic violence to the competent institutions.

15. By adopting the new Law on Misdemeanors, measures necessary for successful, efficient, and effective implementation of the misdemeanour procedure were introduced, either before the misdemeanour bodies or the courts, as a facilitation and simplification of the same. In order to create system access to this area, the Law on Misdemeanors introduced an obligation to the state administration bodies and other organizations to harmonize the applicable laws with the Law on Misdemeanors. Thus, the misdemeanour provisions of the applicable laws referring to the prohibition of discrimination were harmonized.

16. The implementation of the Paris principles, compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as expanding the powers of the Ombudsman's Office by including human rights and freedom promotion were the aims of the adopted amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman.[9]

17. The new Law on Free Legal Aid[10] established a legal framework for citizens exercising the constitutionally guaranteed principle of equal access to justice and to the institutions of the system. Free legal aid is approved in all court and administrative procedures if it is used as a means to resolve a matter of concern for the person requesting legal aid, such as legal aid for rights in the area of social, health, pension or disability insurance, labour relations, protection of children and minors, victims of domestic violence, protection of victims of criminal offences, protection of victims of human trafficking, recognition of asylum and property rights-related issues. Regional offices of the Ministry of Justice (MJ) and competent

[7] Official Gazette No. 79 dated 3 May 2013.
[8] Official Gazette No. 138 dated 17 September 2014.
[9] Official Gazette No. 181 dated 29 September 2016.
[10] Consolidated text dated 12 July 2012.

citizens associations are included in providing legal aid, while lawyers are included in providing legal aid in the court and administrative procedures. These legal measures improved the access of vulnerable categories to justice.

18. The 2013-2020 Gender Equality Strategy was adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on 20 February 2013.[11] The strategy was elaborated upon findings and recommendations from the assessment on the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Gender Equality (2007-2012) and contains the national priorities in the area of equal opportunities of women and men for the next eight years. The strategy is based on the gender equality and enjoyment of human rights principles as cross-sectoral issues; it provides specific goals regarding integration of gender mainstreaming in the national processes of policymaking (through strengthening the gender equality mechanisms, through developing harmonized indicators for measuring gender equality progress pursuant to the national laws and international conventions), and intervention in sectoral priority areas as well, such as education, employment, agriculture, health, gender-based violence, human trafficking, media, human rights and peacekeeping activities. The Assembly is responsible for monitoring its implementation. Goals of the Strategy are implemented through the 2013-2016 NAP. A new NAP for 2017-2020 will be adopted in 2017.

19. In order to integrate gender mainstreaming in the budget processes, the Government, after the adoption of the 2012-2017 Strategy on Gender Responsive Budgeting, also adopted the Methodology on Gender Responsive Budgeting for the state administration bodies,[12] which shows the process of integration of gender mainstreaming in the budgeting process.[13]

20. The 2013-2016 Strategy and NAP for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration represents a comprehensive policy for combating human trafficking with the concerted action of all relevant institutions and organizations. In 2016, an evaluation of the (2013-2016) National Strategy was made, upon which a new draft National Strategy was developed, with a 2017-2020 time frame.

21. The coordinators for equal opportunities of women and men at central and local levels, pursuant to their obligation under the law, initiate and implement activities to promote the specific needs of women. Upon the undertaken measures they deliver information in a unified form to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP). However, there is a need for their additional training for appropriate information delivery in accordance with the unified form.

22. In the strategic documents from several areas (education, employment, social, health care, demographic development etc.) gender mainstreaming has been taken into consideration. Thereby, measures and programs that provide facilitation and improvement of the women's lives have been planned and implemented, such as reproduction health programs, measures for favourable access of girls and women to education, access to the labour market, etc.

[11] Official Gazette No. 27 dated 22 February 2013.
[12] Adopted at the 151st Session of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on 21 May 2014.
[13] See paragraph No. 45.

Article 3

Reply to Recommendations No. 13, No. 13 (a), No. 15, No. 19 and No. 23 (e)

23. The Republic of Macedonia, as signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, drafted a Report on the implementation of the declaration in the context of twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the drafting of the Report, through a transparent and inclusive process, all relevant ministries/state institutions and the civil sector were involved. The draft Report was considered and adopted at an Assembly session involving the Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men. The Report contains all amendments to the laws and information on the progress in social and economic life in terms of achieving equality among men and women.

24. Legal protection in the Republic of Macedonia, in case of gender-based unequal treatment, continues to be implemented through the established protective mechanisms such as the Ombudsman's Office, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD), and the courts.

25. A legal representative for the protection of the right to gender-based equal treatment has not been hired to date. Complaints that possibly would be submitted to MLSP are to be referred to CPD for further treatment. During the reporting period, no complaint has been submitted to the legal representative for determining gender-based unequal treatment.

26. In 2013, 83 complaints were submitted to the CPD; in 2014 the number of complaints increased to 106, while in 2015 the number of complaints was reduced to 70 complaints. Based on gender, there were 9 complaints recorded in 2013, 10 in 2014, and 2 in 2015. In 2016, the Basic Court Skopje 1 in Skopje adopted a verdict establishing gender-based discrimination, which was the first one in labour relations pursuant to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination.

27. The total number of submitted complaints to the Ombudsman's Office was 3,780 in 2013. In 2014, the number of complaints was 4,249, while in 2015 the number of complaints was 4,403. In 2016, there was no complaint submitted on the grounds of gender-based discrimination, i.e. no complaints have been submitted by women to demand protection of their rights against violation on the basis of discrimination solely for being a woman. However, regardless of this situation and resulting from the analyses made, the Ombudsman's Office assessed that discrimination is present in all areas of social life.[14]

28. In 2013, the Ombudsman's Office reacted upon 63 requests for protection against discrimination, in 30 of which the citizens demanded protection against discrimination based on ethnic affiliation. In 15 cases the Ombudsman's Office found violation of the citizens' rights, i.e. discrimination, after which recommendations to the competent authorities were submitted. The Ombudsman's recommendations in 8 cases were accepted, a fact indicating that the authorities acknowledged that there had been ethnicity-based violation of a human right; in 7 cases, the recommendations were not accepted, of which the Ombudsman's Office informed the Government.

29. On the provision of free legal aid, in 2014, 254 decisions were made, which represents an increase in the number of requests for free legal aid sent to the MJ, as

[14] http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2013.pdf.

compared to previous years. In 2013, the number of submitted requests was 160, which points to an increase of 94 requests in 2014.The number of the approved requests amounts to 114, while the number of rejected requests amounts to 140. The procedure for 7 submitted requests was stopped due to withdrawal of the party requesting such free legal aid from further court proceedings, while another 4 decisions to stop providing free legal aid were made due to changes in the personal circumstances relating to the beneficiary. In 2014, the first requests for free legal aid by persons who were asylum seekers were submitted as well. Namely, for the same period (1 January 2014 – 31 December 2014) 25 such requests were submitted; for 24 of them a decision was made to stop the procedure, while free legal aid was approved for 1 (one) request. In the 1 January-31 December 2015 period, 193 decisions were made, which represents a reduction in the number of requests received by the MJ compared to 2014. The number of approved requests amounted to 113 (76 women and 37 men), while the number of rejected requests amounted to 80 (50 women and 30 men).

30. Most of the approved requests for free legal aid pertain to the property rights legal issues, then to the protection of the victims of domestic violence and protection of children, while other legal areas such as the social care, pensions, social and health insurance and labour relations are less represented. In 2014, an increased number of women applicants requesting free legal aid in the context of the protection of victims of domestic violence was also observed, pursuant to Article 8 of the Law on Free Legal Aid.

31. In the Register of citizens' associations providing free legal aid in preliminary court proceedings, run by the MJ, one (1) new association was registered in 2016. By this, the total number of such associations amounted to 10. As of November 2016, the Register of lawyers providing free legal aid had 314 such lawyers.

32. Recent data on the representation of women in the judiciary is as follows: of the total number of 579 judges, 235 are men and 344 are women. Out of 34 court presidents, 22 are men and 12 women.

33. In order to protect rights in the area of labour relations in the state and public administration, the Agency for Administration, in the reporting period, received appeals and complaints from civil servants and administration employees amounting to 2,010; 970 were from women and 1,040 from men.

Article 4

Reply to Recommendations No. 9, No. 15, No. 17 and No. 19

34. Pursuant to Article 118 of the Constitution, international treaties, ratified in accordance with the Constitution, represent an internal part of the domestic legal system of the Republic of Macedonia and may not be changed by law or other act. This constitutional provision is enshrined in Article 98 of the Constitution; it stipulates that the courts administer justice on the basis of the Constitution, the laws and the international treaties ratified pursuant to the Constitution. As a consequence, when making a court decision, the courts have the freedom to directly apply the provisions of each international convention, previously ratified by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

35. The CEDAW and its Optional Protocol are studied as part of the subject of international law, in context of conducting training for legal professionals in the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors of the Republic of Macedonia, specifically in the programme for initial training of future judges and public prosecutors.

36. At the same time, with the purpose of effective implementation of the Committee's recommendations on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, MLSP, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and institutions, as well as with support by the UN-Women office in Skopje, drafted the 2014-2016 Operational Program for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

37. Pursuant to the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, special measures were undertaken to remove the objective obstacles that lead to unequal representation of women and men or unequal status of persons belonging to one gender compared to persons belonging to other gender, as well as to encourage greater representation of the less represented gender.

38. In the context of the cooperation and coordination of the MLSP with the state administration bodies and the local self-government units, several strategic documents and action plans that provide goals and activities to promote gender equality on the national level were drafted. Out of 81 municipalities, 14 have drafted local action plans that also define activities contributing to the promotion of gender equality at the local level as well.

39. The Municipality of Chair provides continuous technical and financial support to women sports clubs, individual designers and other female artisans in the territory of the municipality. As a result of this support, the participation of women in the context of implementation of cultural activities has been increased by 30%, while in the context of sports activities it has been increased by 50%.

40. In context of the Municipality of Bogdanci's Local Action Plan for Promotion of Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, in 2015, activities were undertaken to promote the care and protection of single mothers and of the mothers of children with disabilities by organizing individual meetings, inclusion in job arrangements, free day care for the children of single parents with low monthly income, etc.

41. The Municipality of Veles, in the area of social care, has a special budget item called "Gender Equality "with a budget of MKD 330,000 for implementation of the municipality's operational plan for equal opportunities. In context of the promotion of new forms of services and encouraging measures for vulnerable groups, the municipality provided financial assistance to single-parent families and victims of domestic violence, thereby taking into account the equal representation of women and men in this service. The municipality has active cooperation with the civil sector that promotes gender equality and human rights.

42. The Municipality of Novaci undertakes measures of encouragement and programme measures in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men. The resurfacing and reconstruction of local and regional roads, which have greatly facilitated and accelerated access of movement for all citizens of the municipality, especially for mothers with small children, should be noted. A new sports hall actively used by the boys and girls has been opened. The IPA project "Living Nature-Living History "has created conditions to develop the rural tourism in Mariovo, which in turn will improve the economic power of the population in that part of the Municipality of Novaci.

Article 5

Reply to Recommendations No. 9 (c), No. 15, No. 17, No. 21, 21 (a), No. 23 (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) and No. 38 (d)

43. Pursuant to the strategic documents, in the context of preventing and dealing with gender stereotypes and prejudice, a series of trainings and workshops have

been implemented for introducing the concept of equality and non-discrimination and recognition of the elements that lead to discrimination, intended for various target groups such as: employees engaged in labour inspection; mechanisms for gender equality at the local level, more specifically the Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men and coordinators. The objective of the workshops, besides these two concepts, was also to introduce the concept of gender equality, the obligation, and the significance of forming the Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men, as well as their competences and obligations in promoting gender equality at the local level.

44. MLSP, in cooperation with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Portugal, and Romania, started the implementation of the Twinning project "Support for implementation of gender equality "in May 2015. The project activities were focused on strengthening the capacity of all stakeholders in the field of gender equality, being significant for the human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as on increasing the effectiveness and preparedness of the State in this field, as part of the preparations for accession to EU. In accordance with the prepared training program, the PR capacity of the gender promoting institutions at the national and local levels has been strengthened, as well as the key and relevant concepts for the work of the ministries, the application and importance of the acquis communautaire and the concept of promoting gender equality. As part of the project, analyses of the national legislation in the field of gender equality were made, with recommendations for required changes of the existing legislation and harmonizing with the acquis communautaire.

45. The Republic of Macedonia has been involved in the UN-Women regional project for Promotion of Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe, implemented since 2011 in several stages. In November 2013, the implementation of the second stage officially commenced, ending in 2016. In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs from a gender mainstreaming context, by integrating the gender equality principle in the policies and developmental strategies of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in 2014 a methodology for gender responsive budgeting was adopted. The methodology operationalizes the efforts of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Strategy for Gender-Responsive Budgeting and a budgeting circulation letter, which, in accordance with the 2012 amendments, obliges budgetary beneficiaries at the central level to choose one programme for gender analysis and develop gender indicators for that program. In this direction, the methodology establishes the process for selection of the programs, the steps for implementing a gender analysis and the method for defining gender indicators. This methodology represents an initial introduction to the so-called Gender Budgetary Statement that the institutions should submit along with budget requests for the selected programme for the upcoming year.

46. With the expert and mentor support from UN-Women, nine Ministries[15] have successfully implemented the methodology in the 2013-2016 period and they have prepared Gender Budgetary Statements that the institutions submit along with the budget requests for the selected programs for the upcoming year. By introducing gender responsive budgeting,[16] the transparency and accountability of the institutions in terms of spending is also improved and equal opportunities are promoted.

[15] Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Agency for Entrepreneurship, Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning and Ministry of the Interior.

[16] The Republic of Macedonia started the process of gender-responsive budgeting in 2008.

47. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is a strategic partner and hence responsible institution for the activities that are implemented in the country. As part of this project, more specifically, activities are implemented for strengthening the capacity at central and local levels in the field of gender responsive budgeting and exchanging experiences and knowledge for its implementation. The project focused on nine Ministries that implemented the Methodology for Gender-Responsive Budgeting, then the Ministry of Finance, as well as 10 local self-government units,[17] which were obligated through a memorandum of understanding with UN-Women to introduce gender mainstreaming in some of the programs and budgets at local level. As a result of the enhanced capacity, which was provided by several trainings and mentorships, measures have been introduced to promote gender equality for 12 programmes in 7 out of 10 local self-government units. At the same time, high officials of the 10 local self-government units participated in two study visits for exchanging experiences and knowledge, which is a result from the best practices of the cities of Vienna and Reykjavik, for introducing gender-responsive budgeting. In 2014, the Association of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS) joined the project for the first time, and they implemented initial trainings for gender-responsive budgeting for the other 71 municipalities in Macedonia. In order to promote the activities for gender equality in the municipalities, and to provide resources and space for exchange of experiences and knowledge, ZELS has opened the first online platform for gender equality at the local level.

48. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in cooperation with UN-Women, has implemented the Project for Developing a Specific Module for Gender Mainstreaming for civil servants and their integration in the programme for training of MISA (2014-2015). An electronic module has been prepared for understanding the concept of gender equality by civil servants at national and local levels. As part of this activity, a manual on introducing gender mainstreaming in the programs and policies has been drafted, which is available for all civil servants. It provides guidelines on how to make the policies, programs, and activities that are implemented by state administration bodies gender-sensitive, and for them to have the same benefits for all citizens, men and women. By the end of 2016, a test was conducted by MISA as well as the promotion of this e-module.

49. By means of a project for equality and non-discrimination supported by the British Council, the 24 trained trainers have conducted more than 38 trainings. The trainings were attended by more than 800 individuals, civil servants and administration employees, employees in the judicial administration, social partners and civil organizations active in identifying and treating discrimination cases. In context of this project, Guidelines for introducing the National Strategy for Equality and Non-discrimination have been drafted as well as a manual for protection against discrimination with best practice examples. They are intended for the stakeholders, who have a need for protection and for exercising the right to equality and non-discrimination. At the final conference, a declaration for cooperation among the institutions and their joint action in the field of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and human rights protection was adopted, titled "Let's make equal opportunities and non-discrimination a reality".

50. The cooperation with OSCE resulted in publication of the following materials: "Guidelines on grounds for discrimination "and "Research on discrimination in employment advertisements",[18] where, besides other findings, it was pointed out that the dominant grounds for discrimination in employment advertisements was

[17] Aerodrom, Bitola, Bogovinje, Gjorche Petrov, Mavrovo and Rostushe, Sveti Nikole, Skopje, Strumica, Tetovo and Shtip.

[18] Available at: http://kzd.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/publikacii/DISKRIMINACIJA_VO_OGLASITE_MK_2014.pdf.

gender affiliation (55% of the cases); on the other hand, in 70% of discrimination cases, there was discrimination based on gender and age. A report on the assessment of implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination is created annually.

51. During 2013, CPD, in cooperation with the civil associations Macedonian Center for International Cooperation and "Polio Plus", as part of the programme "Progress" funded the EU-implemented project "From Norm to Practice". The aim of the project was to contribute to respecting equality, encouraging combating discrimination, and raising the awareness of the general public, in order to overcome the challenges in dealing with discriminatory practices. The project equally covered women and men who belonged to the category of persons with disabilities.

52. In the context of overcoming stereotypes, raising awareness about the role of gender mainstreaming as well as identifying the opportunities and methods for integration and implementation of gender mainstreaming at all levels, in the context of the UN Regional Program South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC),[19] in the Ministry of Defense (MD) and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM), a team of NATO-certified instructors was formed (14 instructors) for gender equality. The team of instructors has implemented a series of trainings as part of the pre-deployment training for preparation of ARM servicemen to be deployed in peace missions; it was implemented by NATO-certified gender instructors. From 2013 to 2016, in international peace missions (UN, NATO, EU), 40 women officers have been deployed. The training programme involved 1,822 troops from MD and ARM, as follows: civilians — 267, officers — 498, non-commissioned officers — 322 and professional soldiers — 735. The gender equality training was conducted at all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical.

53. In the context of the activities of the project "Support of integration of the principles of gender equality in the reforms of the security sector in the Western Balkans ", a study was drafted: "The position of women in the armed forces in Western Balkan countries ", published in 2014.

54. In 2013, to meet the needs of the Republic of Macedonia for ratification of the CAHVIO Convention, two analyses of the national legislation, the legal system and the policies were made, from the aspect of domestic violence and their alignment with the CAHVIO Convention.

55. Based on the analysis, the Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence has been enacted, based on the principles provided in the convention: raising awareness and sensitizing the general and professional public in the context of prevention, raising the level of accountability for urgent, diligent and efficient action by officials and institutions for prevention of domestic violence; providing required, efficient and effective protection of victims, in accordance with their needs and interests; the victim's right to ask the competent institutions and associations to be provided with assistance and protection, and to be informed by the officials about their rights, the measures for protection and the procedures for enforcing such measures, as well as about the available services for assistance and protection; the victim's right to choose a person who will accompany them in the proceedings, in order to obtain support for the victim and assistance in the protection of their integrity in the proceedings before officials and authorities; protection of the personal integrity of the victim, through prohibition of publishing the information, upon which the victim or the members of their family can be

[19] http://www.seesac.org/.

identified; special protection for children, when they endure violence or when they are witnesses to violent relations in the family; the definition has been expanded by adding economic violence and stalking; gender-based violence against women has been defined, it entails violence against women because they are women or violence that disproportionately affects them (the terms used in this law refer to both men and women); the reply from the authorities is enhanced; the liability of the person committing domestic violence has been increased; integrated national policies are to be implemented by enacting a National Strategy on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence and by forming a National Body on Domestic Violence, with a mandate to monitor and analyse the situation of family violence in the country, to coordinate the activities of all relevant institutions and to propose measures for promoting the situation and the measures for implementation of the foreseen activities; multi-departmental cooperation among the relevant authorities is strengthened, including the associations of citizens, by adopting a Protocol for cooperation between the relevant authorities for taking measures for prevention and protection against domestic violence.[20]

56. By amending the Law Amending the Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, a new provision has been included, which includes an obligation of the social work center (SWC), whenever there is information that domestic violence has been committed by a person in possession of firearms or has access and handles official fire arms, to inform the competent authorities in order to take measures for the fire arms to be temporarily taken from them.

57. For successful implementation of the provisions of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, in 2015, 5 bylaws have been enacted by the competent authorities, namely the following: MLSP (2),[21] MoI (2)[22] and MH (1).[23] These bylaws govern the method for implementation and monitoring of the measures for protection against domestic violence, the risk assessment for the life and bodily integrity of the victim and the risk for the violence to recur.

58. Each year, the MoI, along with all stakeholders, takes active participation and involvement in the implementation of the campaigns that refer to raising public awareness about the existence of the problem of domestic violence and protection of the victims, as well as in many roundtables, debates, and public events. In order to establish and develop a coordinated approach for protection of victims of domestic violence, standard operative procedures on police actions in case of domestic violence were drafted.

59. In 2013, an analysis on court cases of domestic violence from a gender mainstreaming point of view[24] was conducted, and the findings and

[20] Official Gazette No.143/15.

[21] Rulebook on the method of implementing and monitoring the measures for protection of the victim of domestic violence taken by the Social Work Center and on the method for monitoring the imposed measures for protection; Rulebook on the method of enforcing the imposed temporary measure for protection — mandatory counselling for perpetrators of domestic violence (Official Gazette No. 17/2015).

[22] Rulebook on the method of assessing the risk for the life and bodily integrity of the victim of domestic violence and the risk for the violence to be repeated; Rulebook on the method of enforcing the issued temporary measures for protection of the victim of domestic violence and the members of their family (Official Gazette No. 28/15).

[23] Rulebook on the method of enforcing the temporary measure for protection against domestic violence — mandatory treatment for the perpetrators if they use alcohol, drugs and other psychotropic substances or are mentally ill. (Official Gazette No. 94/15).

[24] Mircheva S., Chacheva V., Kenig N., Voice of Justice. *Assessment of judicial proceedings in cases of domestic violence with a special focus on the management of cases from a gender perspective*, Institute for sociological, political and legal research — ISPLR, Skopje, 2014 (in Macedonian).

recommendations from the analysis were used to implement trainings for over 100 judges from the basic courts in the country. The analysis of the court cases shows a tendency in increasing domestic violence in the overall structure of the number of committed criminal offences (from 2% in 2008 to 5% in 2012). In the total number of court-imposed sanctions for perpetrators of all criminal offences during the investigated period, penalties represented 51%, alternative measures amounted to 49%; on the other hand, the alternative measures for perpetrators of criminal offences involving domestic violence were more often imposed, amounting to 57%, while penalties amounted to 43%. This analysis also confirms that domestic violence has specific features of gender-based violence. According to the statistics, 93% of the reported and convicted perpetrators of criminal acts of domestic violence were men, while 82% of the victims are women. Of all the victims of criminal offences of domestic violence, only 4% were men who were victims of women perpetrators. On the other hand, 76% of all domestic violence victims are women who are victims of men. The most frequent type of relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, according to police statistics, involves spouses, including former spouses and extramarital partners, amounting to 65%; on the other hand, 95% of the victims as spouse are women.

60. In the context of raising public awareness to prevent and protect against domestic violence, 54 activities were implemented, as follows: (1) As part of the project "Safety in schools ", 25 educational workshops were conducted for the students, which addressed the topic of domestic violence and trafficking in children as well as child abuse; (2) As part of the project "Legal socialization of young people ", 6 educational workshops were organized for the students; (3) 7 educational workshops were organized for children housed in the SOS Children's Village and the mothers who are their caretakers; 2 educational workshops were organized with citizens in the prevention centres in the Municipality of Gjorche Petrov and the Municipality of Gazi Baba; 5 educational workshops with members of the Association of Pensioners of the City of Skopje; in cooperation with NGOs, 6 educational workshops were organized with students and 3 public forums, i.e. panel discussions. MLSP, together with the local self-government units, conducted 5 regional trainings for raising public awareness about domestic violence, and 6 regional trainings for professional teams in 30 social work centres, which referred to the implementation of the new legal framework for prevention and protection against domestic violence.

61. Significant progress in promoting women's access to justice was made with the provision in Article 55 of the Criminal Code that establishes gender sensitive access to justice and protection against secondary victimization for women who are victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom and sexual morality, humanity and international law. Thus, this Article guarantees the right: to be interviewed by a person of the same gender in the police and public prosecution; not to respond to questions that refer to the victim's intimate life which are not related to the criminal offence; and to demand interviewing by means of visual and audio aids, in a manner set forth in this Law.

62. Each year, a decision has been made to allocate the proceeds from lotteries and entertainment games for 2013/2014/2015 in order to help fund the programme activities of national organizations for disabled persons, their associations, the associations for combating domestic violence and the Red Cross of the Republic of Macedonia, in the annual amount of MKD 66,000,000, an amount increased by 10% compared to 2014.

63. According to the MoI statistical data, in 2015, an increase of criminal offences committed in the context of domestic violence of almost 33% percent has been observed, compared to the previous year. According to MoI statistical data,

747 criminal offences have been committed against women: 443 women as wives, 87 as mothers, 60 as extramarital partners, 47 as former wives and 36 as daughters.

Statistical data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, disaggregated by gender affiliation

Gender affiliation	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016 (January-September)*
women	598	722	810	596
men	104	146	177	146
children	99	131	142	107

Statistical data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, disaggregated by ethnic affiliation

Ethnic affiliation	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016 (January-September)*
Macedonians	643	771	919	698
Albanians	65	112	81	53
Roma	54	78	86	49
Other	39	38	43	49

Statistical data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, disaggregated by the type of committed violence

Type of violence	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*
psychological	660	782	673	764
physical	539	672	404	411
sexual	5	11	5	26
economic	15	33	15	61

64. Currently, four regional centres for persons who are victims of domestic violence (shelters) have been opened in Macedonia by MLSP, while the civil sector has opened two shelters.

	2013	*2014*	*2015*	*2016 (January-September)*
Housing in shelters	33	30	43	21

65. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, together with UNDP and UN-Women, as part of 16 days of activism against domestic violence, the Republic of Macedonia got involved in the campaign against domestic violence and for raising public awareness for prevention and protection against domestic violence.

66. Based on the Law on Social Care and the Rulebook on the method and procedure for assigning funds to civil associations for performing defined actions in the field of social care, MLSP annually provides funds to support projects of associations for the protection of victims of domestic violence, which include enabling the continuous functioning of a national SOS line for reporting domestic violence and the conditions for temporary accommodation in shelters for victims of domestic violence managed by an association.

67. In accordance with the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, a National Coordination Body has been formed for protection

against domestic violence, comprised of the competent authorities (MLSP, MJ, MH, MoI, MES), members of the Parliament (MPs) of the Republic of Macedonia, the judiciary system, Ombudsman's Office and NGOs.

68. To have a better implementation of this Law, a National Strategy for prevention and protection against domestic violence is being drafted.

69. In 2014, a significant reduction of 11% of criminal offences "against sexual freedom and sexual morality "has been observed, i.e. 135 offences have been registered (vs. 151 previously). The reduction is noted in offences "sexual assault on a child" — 45 (vs. 50 previously) and of "sexual gratification in public "— 22 (vs. 35 previously), while the criminal offence of "rape" has increased by 18.4%. When solving these criminal offences, the police have reached a high degree efficiency of 90.4%, while for the criminal offences, 149 perpetrators have been reported.

70. The right of the victim to ask from competent authorities and associations to be provided with assistance and protection is provided, as well as for the victim to be informed by the officials about their rights, the measures for protection and the procedures for enforcing them, as well as about the available services for assistance and protection, the right to choose a person who will accompany them in the procedures, in order to provide support for the victim and assistance in the protection of their integrity in the procedures before officials and the institutions.

71. The Institute for Social Activities (ISA) has maintained continuous monitoring and upgrading the applicative WEB software LIRICUS, where the social workers electronically register all active and passive beneficiaries of social services, which are recorded in all social work centres. In the software, the gender affiliation of the person who is a beneficiary of the social work center is a compulsory indicator for all social risks. In this way, the Institute for Social Activities has at their disposal gender disaggregated statistics for all categories of beneficiaries of social services, whose electronic records are mandatory. The e-program LIRICUS offers an option for processing numerous indicators related to social risks.

72. In 2014, an analysis was made and the gender concept was included in the professional documentation of ISA for working with various categories of persons who are at social risk (guidelines and standards). Upon the recommendations from the analysis, which, inter alia, showed that the applied forms are not gender-sensitive, in 2014, the documents relating to the beneficiaries have been revised by incorporating gender mainstreaming. Forms have been revised by integrating the gender-based conception form for monitoring the work with a beneficiary, findings, opinions, and the individual operative plan with a beneficiary.

73. In 2013, the Institute for Social Activities created the module for gender equality in social care intended for professionals in the social work centres. This raised the capacity and application of this module in the practical work of professionals in the social work centres.

74. During the reporting period, the Institute for Social Activities conducted several trainings (46 workshops) involving 627 experts from the social care institutions relating to various modules (promoting equality and respecting diversity, developing communications skills, working with a child, working with a family, working with a community, gender equality in social care, working with elderly persons, trafficking in human beings, working with marginalized communities/groups at risk, sexuality and sexual and reproductive rights of persons with disabilities, training for employees in day care centres, training for specialized foster families, etc.). In addition, there is continuous implementation of the process

of licensing of professionals in social care institutions. Thus, 845 persons have obtained licenses for work thus far.

75. Inter-agency standard operating procedures (SOPs) for prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) in crisis situations are part of the 2016 Action Plan for sexual and reproductive health relating to situations of crisis/emergency situations, including the ongoing migrant and refugee crisis. In 2016, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 3 specialized trainings were conducted relating to clinical management of rape, covering 64 service providers, 50 of which were healthcare professionals. The Ministry of Health has prepared them according to the Minimal Basic Service Package (MBSP) for the Reproductive Health Strategy (RHS) during humanitarian crises. These procedures cover the roles and obligations of each sector that is involved in the prevention of and response to GBV and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), both in man-made and natural disaster situations and in situations of peace. Inter-agency SOPs in crisis situations have initially been drafted in order to be implemented in the transit centres introduced by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in other locations in the country, where refugees, migrants or internally displaced persons may be located.

76. In order to raise the awareness of the media outlets on the need and the methods for preventing degrading representations, i.e. for promoting a positive image of women in the media outlets, several activities (a series of public debates and workshops etc.) have been implemented intended for media professionals. In order to provide adequate tools for introducing an effective self-regulatory mechanism, a special banner has been put up on the website of the Agency since 2013, titled "Gender and the Media ", where all research and analyses are published. In addition, translations of manuals, recommendations, and resolutions on gender-related issues originally issued by the Council of Europe are available. The banner is available in Macedonian, Albanian, and English.[25]

77. With the aim of establishing the method of reporting, the approach towards gender-related issues and the degree of stereotype presentation of women on television programs, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media performs the following, on an annual basis:

(a) Analysis of the method of treating gender-related issues in national TV programme services (in informative/news programs);

(b) Analysis of the method of showing and presenting women and men on national TV programme services (in advertisements).

The results from the research study called "Gender in TV Programs "in 2015 has shown that in TV news, gender-related issues and gender mainstreaming in topics that were of social importance were practically absent, while women as interlocutors were present less frequently than men were. In the context of the method of representing women and men in TV advertisements, it has been observed that women are more present as subjects and they are more often shown in traditional roles. The report also states that most of the subjects in advertisements are in the 18-30 age group.

78. Based on an analysis made in 2015 that refers to 2014, in the context of the structure of employees in TV and radio stations, it is mentioned that the majority of employees in the broadcasting business are men (62%). They are most numerous in the production crew, where they outnumber women by 4.3: 1 (as directors, camera

[25] http://www.avmu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1090%3Arodot&catid=132%3A2013-11-05-21-48-32&lang=en.

operators, video editors, and other production crew, where 597 of the employees were men and 139 were women). Men outnumbered women also when it came to management and to technical crew.

79. In the context of raising awareness and respecting diversity in society and neutralizing intolerance that is spread through the media and social networks, amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted[26] on spreading racist and xenophobic materials electronically via the Internet. The need for raising the level of adherence to professional and ethical standards in the media and raising the awareness of media service providers and media workers about the phenomena of hatred and intolerance on various grounds in media products and for providing tools for avoiding them has been identified during the drafting of the 2013-2017 Strategy for development of broadcasting activities. Per this Strategy, Guidelines for monitoring hate speech were drafted[27] covering international standards and principles related to the freedom of expression and hate speech as well as the court practice of the European Court for Human Rights on this issue.

80. Upon the proposal by the Inter-departmental consulting and advisory group on equal opportunities for women and men, the process of electronic submission of the application for salary compensation for sick leave and for maternity leave by companies for their absent employees to the Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia (HIFM) has been promoted, thus facilitating the administrative procedure. This model enables automatic control and calculation of the compensation payments for sick leave, faster payments, reduced red tape, and smaller burdens for companies, thus preventing discrimination against women and their limitation to access to jobs. This provides for faster compensation payment for sick leave and parental leave.

81. MLSP, together with the Macedonian Women's Lobby (MWL), participated in implementing a project titled "Empowering women and girls for preserving peace and building trust ", which was supported by the British Embassy in Skopje. In addition to the activities planned for this project, a three-day workshop was organized. MLSP, as the competent institution, presented the completed activities and achieved results mapped out in the 2013–2015 NAP for Implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 (2000), in order to identify the challenges that the concerned institutions faced during the implementation of the action plan, while guidelines were defined for future activities for the 2016 - 2020 period.

(a) In the same project, workshops were organized with the appointed coordinators at the local level on the importance of Resolution 1325 (2000), in the following municipalities: Tetovo, Mavrovo, Rostushe, Strumica, Karposh, Cheshinovo-Obleshevo, Shtip, Debar, Bitola, Tearce, and Veles;

(b) In context of the project, Guidelines for implementing Resolution 1325 (2000) were drafted, intended for the municipal Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men. The document has been printed out and distributed to all commissions and municipalities.

82. The Ministry of Defense has implemented a series of trainings, comprising: Gender-related terms and definitions; International legal frameworks for implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) of the UN Security Council on women, peace and security; the NAP of the Republic of Macedonia for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) of the Security Council of the United Nations on women, peace and security; the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming in the

[26] Official Gazette No. 27/2014.

[27] As part of the project 'Strengthening administrative capacity of bodies in charge of telecommunications and media for efficient regulation of the new digital and multi-purpose services. Available on the Agency's website in Macedonian, English and Albanian.

process of planning operations; gender mainstreaming in military operations; and the importance of leadership for the integration and implementation of gender mainstreaming at all levels in MD and ARM.

Article 6

Reply to Recommendations No. 24 (a), (b), (c) and (d) and No. 26 (a) (b) (c)

83. With the Law amending the Law on Social Care,[28] health care is provided to persons who are victims of human trafficking, when they cannot obtain insurance on other grounds.

84. By passage of the Law amending the Criminal Code,[29] paragraph 1 of Article 418-8 has been amended. This defines the characteristics of the criminal offence "Trafficking in human beings ", in the context of criminalizing "beggary or exploitation for an activity that is legally forbidden ", for which a sentence of at least four years imprisonment has been provided. At the same time, in Article 418-d of this Law, adequate rephrasing has been made of the criminal offence "Child trafficking ", in context of harmonization of the terms "underage person "and "child ", pursuant to the amendments to the applicable laws in the area of child care.

85. In 2015, several law amendments have been made: by means of the Law amending the Criminal Code. Article 418-d has been amended in the context of establishing a penalty of at least 8 years imprisonment for a person who induces a child to beggary or exploits a child for an activity that is forbidden by law. The same Article provides a penalty of at least 10 years imprisonment for a person that commits this act towards a child that has not yet turned 14 years of age. Also, Article 418-d was amended with paragraph 4 to provide a penalty of at least 12 years imprisonment for the person who obtained sexual favours from a child who has not yet turned 14 years of age. Furthermore, in the context of alignment of the terms "underage child "and "child", pursuant to the amendment of the applicable laws in the area of child care and protection of children in the aforementioned provisions, the term "underage person" has been replaced with the word "child".

86. The National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration (CHT and IM) in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia coordinates two bodies: its Secretariat and its Subgroup Combating Child Trafficking, all established in 2003. Representatives of international organization, civil society organizations (CSOs), and experts from government institutions are members in these bodies. These two bodies are actively involved in conducting and implementing the activities for improving the conditions for CHT in Macedonia.

87. The National Commission implements activities which entail a coordinated approach of several institutions for assistance, support, and reintegration of the victims and raising public awareness about human trafficking. To this end, funds have been earmarked through a budget programme for combating human trafficking as part of the budget of the MoI, as well as in partnership with international organizations that appear as donors for some projects for support and implementation and CSOs.

88. The Republic of Macedonia, through the Office of the National Mechanism for Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking, works committedly on prevention of

[28] Official Gazette No. 79/2013.
[29] Official Gazette No. 27/14.

human trafficking and protection of the victims in the context of implementing the National Strategy and Action Plan for CHT and IM for the 2013-2016 period.

89. In addition to coordinating and cooperating with relevant stakeholders in the process of referral and protection of victims of human trafficking, several activities have been implemented in order to promote the system for protection and prevention. A Program for assistance and support during reintegration of the victims of human trafficking has been developed, while the Program for assistance and support of child victims of human trafficking has also been revised. The programs are based on the needs of victims and they are designed as reference material for practical use; they are intended for social workers from the social work centres and for their implementation, together with other relevant institutions and CSOs. Indicators for identifying victims of human trafficking (VHT) have also been developed, in order to improve the identification of victims of human trafficking and to use them as a practical tool for officers from institutions and organizations, which may come in contact with victims or potential VHT. An Analysis on the situation with identifying and protecting child victims of human trafficking was prepared. These programs are a basis for preparing the individual plan for reintegration of the victim, where the goals, measures, and activities that are taken to help the victim and their family members are established.

90. In context of the Regional Program for Social Care and Prevention of Human Trafficking, seminars have been implemented for healthcare professionals from several towns to increase prevention and care for VHT. This involved 50 attendants. Similarly, 3 two-day specialized seminars have been conducted for professionals who take care of child VHT. At these seminars, 60 professionals were trained from SWC from around the country.

91. During the reporting period, the effort to prevent human trafficking, especially of women and girls from all ethnic communities, has been followed up by activities for raising public awareness, including:

(a) A pantomime caravan traveling to Debar, Probishtip (2 events) and Skopje to mark "18 October ", the EU Anti-Trafficking Day;

(b) Marking the "Week on combating human trafficking ", organized by CID and NGOs in cooperation with the National Coordinator (NC) for CHT and IM. The campaign focused on preventing child trafficking used for labour exploitation and beggary;

(c) Training by volunteers of the Red Cross of the Republic of Macedonia for 19 female peer educators in the context of prevention of human trafficking, coming from Skopje, Kavadarci, Ohrid, Struga, Debar, and Strumica.

92. In order to raise the capacity of teachers in schools relating to prevention of social risks and human trafficking, together with the Municipal Center for Social Works in Probishtip and the "Open Gate" GO (*Otvorena Porta*), a training was conducted intended for class teachers and the psychological and pedagogical services in schools. The training has been performed as a result of the survey that was conducted and showed the current relevance of the topic and the need to establish the situation in schools.

93. At the initiative of the Local Commission for CHT in Bitola, in the context of implementing the Local Action Plan, a workshop was organized with the members of the Council of the Municipality of Bitola. Twenty councillors attended the workshop.

94. The Programme for "Accompanying social work with victims of human trafficking and potential victims" is implemented by the Association for action

against violence and human trafficking "Open Gate "; it has the goal of assisting and monitoring the process of integration of victims of human trafficking, after leaving the shelter, in cooperation with the social work centres. In 2015, 12 persons were involved in the programme for accompanying social work. All female wards were identified and referred in cooperation with the relevant Inter-Municipal SWC in Skopje. A female ward, who had been accommodated in the shelter, was involved in this programme after leaving the shelter. Another female ward was referred — in cooperation with the partner organization from Germany, where this Macedonian national was identified as a victim of human trafficking — to the Netherlands. Three female wards, all foreign nationals, were identified in the Center for Asylum Seekers in Vizbegovo as VHT who had been exploited in another country.

95. Basic medical examinations were provided for all female wards involved in the program. Specialized gynaecological examinations were provided for six such wards. Laboratory tests were conducted for three female wards, testing for HIV and hepatitis A, B, and C. Specialist examinations were provided for three female wards (three interventions by a neuropsychiatrist and three interventions by an internal medicine doctor). Adequate medications were provided accordingly. All expenses for the performed medical examinations were covered by "Open Gate".

96. Specialized legal aid before judiciary bodies was provided for 4 female wards. Regular psychosocial assistance and counselling for the victims, including various types of treatments and individual counselling, were provided by a professional team. A long-term individual plan was developed for all female wards, which provides involvement in the educational process and professional qualification. Five of the assisted female wards got involved in the education process. Three of them attended evening school, while one was enrolled in regular secondary school. One female ward continued her education at the State University in Skopje. For one female ward, an English language course was provided in a private school.

97. During the implementation of the program, 23 joint meetings were held with 5 families of the child victims in order to improve the relations and the link between the parents and children and to provide support for the victims in a home environment. In addition, at the proposal of the competent Inter-municipal SWC, the competent court imposed a measure of enhanced supervision of the children, while appointing "Open Gate" to be involved in the implementation of the program for improving the educational behaviour. The project continued in 2016.

98. The Prevention Units at the MoI, as part of the project "Child Trafficking ", in the context of its Action Plan for implementing the 2014-2015 projects, during the reporting period, implemented circa 140 educational workshops for primary and secondary schools students. The basic aim of the projects was to raise the awareness of students about violating human rights at all levels in the process of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, so that they may understand that the persons who are subjected to human trafficking are actually victims of grave crimes. The Prevention Unit at the Secretariat of Internal Affairs in Ohrid, together with the local NGO sector, conducted four panel discussions on the topic of "Say No to Human Trafficking".

99. In the context of the campaign for "Safe Celebrations of Secondary and Primary School Graduation Proms", the project activity called "Prevention of Child Trafficking" was initiated, involving students from the finishing grades in 7 secondary schools in the region covered by the Sector of Internal Affairs of Strumica.

100. In 2013, 15 victims of human trafficking were identified, of which:

(a) 9 were minors and 6 were adults;

(b) 9 were nationals of the Republic of Macedonia (2 in France, 1 in Switzerland, 1 in Belgium, 1 in Croatia and 4 in Macedonia);

(c) 6 were foreign nationals (2 from Albania, 1 from Kosovo, and 3 from Serbia);

(d) All were women and were labour and sexually exploited.

In 2014, 8 victims of human trafficking were identified, of which:

(e) six (6) were minors and two (2) were adults;

(f) seven (7) were nationals of the Republic of Macedonia and one (1) was a foreign national (Romania);

(g) seven (7) victims were female, and one (1) victim was male;

(h) according to the type of exploitation, three (3) victims were sexually exploited; three (3) victims were sexually exploited with forced marriage; one (1) victim was labour and sexually exploited; and one (1) victim was labour exploited;

(i) 5 victims were accommodated in the Shelter for victims of human trafficking;

(j) six (6) victims were identified in the Republic of Macedonia; one (1) was identified in Slovenia; and one (1) victim was identified in Italy.

101. The data show that children are the most vulnerable group; most often they are nationals of the Republic of Macedonia, girls and aged 14 to 17. The most commonly present types of trafficking in children are sexual exploitation and combining sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

102. In the Shelter Center for VHT, five (5) victims who were girls were accommodated; one was a foreign national (Romania), adult, with a temporary stay permit, and after a brief stay she was returned to her country of origin at her request. Since the opening of the Shelter Center for VHT, by June 2014, 29 persons had been accommodated; 9 of which were adults and 20 were minors; 5 persons were foreign nationals with a temporary stay permit.

103. In 2015, 3 victims of human trafficking were identified, of which:

(a) One (1) was an adult and two (2) were children;

(b) All were female (3);

(c) Type of exploitation: one (1) sexual exploitation; one (1) sexual and labour exploitation; one (1) forced marriage and labour exploitation;

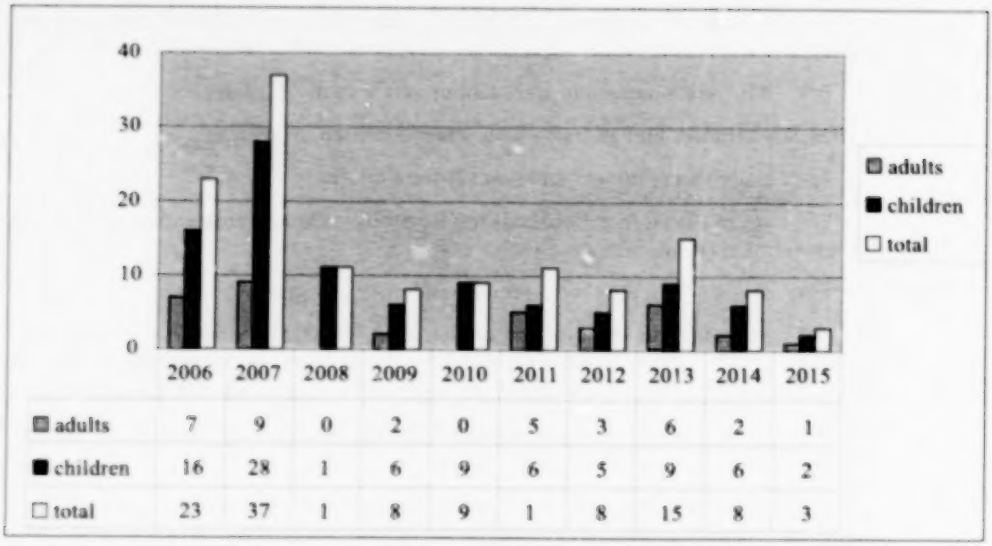
(d) Country where the exploitation took place: one (1) in Italy and two (2) in the Republic of Macedonia;

(e) Two (2) gave a statement to a prosecutor;

(f) One (1) victim was accommodated in the Shelter Center for victims of human trafficking;

(g) One child was repatriated to Macedonia from Croatia in 2013, identified as a victim of human trafficking.

Identified VHT 2006-2015 (source: NMU — MLSP)



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
adults	7	9	0	2	0	5	3	6	2	1
children	16	28	1	6	9	6	5	9	6	2
total	23	37	1	8	9	1	8	15	8	3

104. The following services are available for VHT:

(a) Referral and accommodation in a shelter, needs assessment and crisis intervention;

(b) A team of experts who conduct activities in day and night shifts, as well as accompanying the victims to the necessary destinations;

(c) Food, hygiene packages, clothes and shoes are provided during their stay;

(d) Inclusion in the program for psychosocial assistance (various workshops, training for computer work, basic English lessons, etc.);

(e) Organizing therapeutic and recreational activities, depending on the personal affinities such as: drawing on glass, drawing on canvas, decoupage, hand-made jewellery, drawing on porcelain, knitting, sowing, origami techniques;

(f) Basic medical examinations were provided as well as specialized gynaecological examinations and laboratory tests, testing for HIV, hepatitis A, B and C;

(g) Legal counselling and information about the judicial system and representation before judiciary bodies by a lawyer, in the context of previously initiated court proceedings;

(h) Individual long-term plan for inclusion in the educational process upon returning to the domicile;

(i) Psychological support for victims, including various types of treatments and sessions, group therapy and individual psychological counselling once a week, as well as urgent and more intensive assistance, depending on the need;

(j) Overcoming stress and trauma, forming habits for improving reading skills, positive thinking, basic information about adolescent development problems, emotional relations and relationships with peers, dangers from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.

Part II

Article 7

Reply to Recommendation No. 28

105. The persistent lobbying by MWL supported by the UN-Women and the consensus reached by women politicians has resulted in increasing the quota for women participation in politics. Namely, given the new amendments to the Electoral Code,[30] the legal solution for the participation of both genders in the candidate lists for members of the parliament and councillors have been improved. Namely, by Article 21 of the Law amending the Electoral Code in 2015, Article 64 in the body text of the Law has been amended, by introducing a quota of 40% participation on the party candidates lists for the less represented gender at parliamentary and local elections. That means that out of every three places on the list, at least one place is reserved for the less represented gender and additionally one more place on the list for each ten places.

106. At the 2014 parliamentary elections, 43 women became MPs, from which 8 were Albanian. In the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, 2 ministries are headed by women, while 5 women are chairs of the parliamentary committees. As noted, there are 2 women ministers in the Government, while 5 women hold the office of state secretary in various ministries.

107. With regard to the women participation at the 2013 local elections, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has the following data at its disposal: for the office of mayor in 2013 there were 339 candidates from which 26 were women; 4 women (or 4.9%) have been elected, in the municipalities of Kisela Voda, Tetovo, Gradsko and Bogdanci. With regard to the number of elected women councillors, from the total number of 1,347 elected candidates, 405 or 30% have been women, which is an improvement in relation to 2009, when only 27% were elected. The detailed analysis of women's participation in municipalities shows a disparity among the municipalities. There are municipalities where women participation is above 40% (4 municipalities); from 30 to 40% (37 municipalities); from 20 to 30% (34 municipalities); and less than 20% (6 municipalities).

108. In the context of the personnel structure of the Ministry of Defense, women make up 35%. In the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, the overall percentage of women is 9.2%, of which: 13.3% are commissioned officers; 12.5% are non-commissioned officers; 3.6% are professional soldiers; and 52.8% are administrative staff.

Table: Women representation in ARM, disaggregated by personnel category

Commissioned officers		*Non-commissioned officers*		*Professional soldiers*		*Civilians*		*Total*		*Grand total*
M	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	
754	100	1 489	184	3 761	134	312	168	6 316	586	6 902
10.92%	1.45%	21.57%	2.66%	54.49%	1.94%	4.52%	2.43%	91.51%	8.49%	100%

[30] Official Gazette No. 196 dated 10 November 2015.

109. The Ombudsman's Office in 2015 prepared an analysis on gender representation according to the type of job position and education.[31] The results showed that out of 120,513 employees in the institutions, 61,349 are men (50.51%) and 59,164 (49.09%) are women. With regard to the number of elected and appointed officeholders, it is concluded that the female gender representation in the institutions is 1,306 (45.33%), while the representation of the male gender is 1,575 (54.67%). Similar to the previous category of officials is the ratio between women and men in senior positions; the female gender representation in the institutions is 4,028 (45.45%), while the male gender representation is 4,843 (54.55%). In the context of non-senior positions, the proportion becomes more balanced, where the female gender representation is 53,830 (49.49%), while the male gender representation is 54,941 (50.51%).

110. Out of the total of 120,513 employed men and women in the administration, 56,469 (46.85%) have university education, 6,460 (5.36%) have junior college education, 46,325 (38.43%) have secondary education, while 11,259 (9.34%) have only primary education.

111. The data analysis shows that out of 56,469 employees in the administration with higher education, 32,162 (26.69%) are women, while 24,307 (20.17%) are men. Out of this, in the category of elected and appointed officeholders, 1,302 (45.19%) are women, while 1,544 (53.59%) are men. In senior positions, 3,391 (38.26%) are women, while 4,169 (47.04%) are men; on the other hand, in non-senior positions, 27,469 (25.25%) are women, while 18,594 (17.09%) are men.

112. The Ombudsman's Office has concluded that, this year again, the number of employed women is lower than that of employed men in the administration; likewise, their number is smaller in the senior positions as well. The number of women with university education in the administration is higher in relation to that of men; still there are more men than women as elected and appointed office holders and in the senior positions.

113. Of the 46,325 employees in the administration with secondary education, 19,524 (16.2%) are women and 26,801 (22.24%) are men. Of them, in the managerial positions, 506 (5.71%) are women and 511 (5.77%) are men, while in the non-managerial positions, 19,014 (17.48%) are women and 26,276 (24.16%) are men.

114. The data analysis of the ratio between women and men with secondary education shows that there are significantly more men than women.

115. A similar situation is shown in context of gender representation in relation to primary education; here, out of 11,259 employees with primary education in the administration, 3,882 (3.22%) are women while 7,377 (6.12%) are men.

Article 8

116. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has 474 employees[32] who work at the MFA and at the diplomatic and consular missions of the Republic of Macedonia. Out of the 474 employees, 213 are women and 261 are men.

[31] The data were published in the 2015 Annual Report by the Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Macedonia regarding the level of providing respect, improvement and protection of human rights and freedoms.

[32] Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs — situation as of September 2016.

Senior positions in MFA — directors of the MFA directorates:

15 directors, of whom 6 are women and 9 are men.

Senior positions in MFA — deputy directors and heads of units:

102 senior positions, 48 of which are held by women and 54 by men.

117. The Republic of Macedonia has opened 57 diplomatic and consular missions abroad; in 45 missions, there are ambassadors or general consuls appointed. Out of 45 ambassadors or general consuls, 9 are women while 36 are men.

Minister plenipotentiary or minister counselor at the DCMs of the Republic of Macedonia: 24 officials, of whom 10 are women and 14 are men.

Counselor at DCMs of the Republic of Macedonia:

10 officials, of whom 1 is a woman, and 9 are men.

118. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Defense and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia have 40 women officers to the peacekeeping missions (UN, NATO, EU).

Article 9

Reply to Recommendation No. 38 (d)

119. The Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection[33] has fully taken into consideration the gender-sensitive approach in the procedures for submitting and recognizing the right to asylum in Macedonia. Namely, the asylum seeker has the opportunity, if he/she does not understand the language of the procedure, to be provided with an interpreter for the language of the country of origin or for the language that he/she understands by the MoI Asylum Department. The asylum seekers are entitled to interpreters of the same gender, within the existing opportunities, and are entitled to be interviewed by an authorized official from the MoI Asylum Department of the same gender. The interpreter's costs are covered by the MoI. During the evaluation of the asylum request, the forms of persecution specific to gender are taken into consideration. During the procedure, the personal and general circumstances of the asylum seeker, which refer to the asylum request including the cultural origin or the vulnerability of the asylum seeker, are taken into consideration in a manner and scope in which this can be done.

120. MLSP, by means of arrangement with the Roma Information Center (RIC) and the Roma CSOs, has conducted data mapping of persons that face these problems for registration in the general register of births. According to the recent data, about 800 persons face this problem, whereby, due to various reasons, entry in the general register of births cannot be done and so they are one of the categories most exposed to risk. These individuals remain in that category; until the moment their registration or their personal status is resolved, they cannot enjoy any of the rights provided by the law or opportunities offered by the state. The reasons are various and sometimes even complex; hence there are even persons who have not regulated their status for 30 years and more. To this end, MLSP formed a Working group for problem identification and location; thus in cooperation with the Office for management of registers of births, marriages and deaths (OMRBMD), the MJ and the MoI and the CSOs have recommended measures and systemic solutions for such

[33] Official Gazette Nos. 49/03, 66/07, 142/08, 146/09, 166/12, 101/15 and 152/15.

persons. Some of those measures offer recommendations as to certain legal solutions, especially in the areas of:

(a) more specific definition of the administrative procedure for additional entry in the general register of births, a procedure for which OMRBMD is responsible;

(b) proposal for amendments to the non-litigation procedure, especially regarding the opportunity for determining the birth place in a procedure before the competent courts;

(c) proposals for amending the Family Law;

(d) opportunity for these persons, who do not have identity cards, to register their domicile at the local social work centre's address, mostly due to the fact that large number of the Roma houses and dwellings are still in the legalization phase, and during the process of registering a newborn it is necessary to have the identification card of the parent;

(e) efforts for additional entry in the main book of births to be received for processing at the regional units of the Office, regardless of whether the persons have or do not have the required evidence.

121. As part of the campaign of registering persons in the general register of births, thus far, 536 persons have been identified as not registered in the general register of births, while 120 such cases have been resolved. MLSP earmarks funds from its budget to support DNA analyses. To date, 82 DNA analyses have been supported.

Part III

Article 10

Reply to Recommendation No. 30 (a), (b) and (c)

122. Implementation of the laws on primary and secondary education was revised in the reporting period. The early school dropout rate has gradually decreased, while the rate of finishing higher education has been on the rise.

123. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) works on creating a national frame for gender equality and on creating clear guidelines and indicators, which contribute to fully integrating gender mainstreaming in education, including gender research, analytical tools and methodology, trainings, studies, statistics, and information. The results show that increasing the duration of education contributes to the continuous increase in students, especially the female students, and their continuation of the educational process.

124. The strategies in the field of education and science are closely related to the "Europe 2020 "Strategy, which promotes "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", and especially the issues relating to the early quitting of school, the enhanced performance of the system of education and science, the percentage of young people who should have completed tertiary education, and the investment in skills sought by the labour market.

125. MES receives support for inclusion of all children and improving the students' achievement according to the established standards of STC. UNICEF provides technical assistance and support in building the capacities of MES and related institutions for:

(a) Revising the regulatory framework and financing formula which would define resource allocation on the basis of the concrete needs of each child individually;

(b) Incorporating the training programs (mathematics, mother tongue, preventing violence, inter-ethnic and intercultural education) and strengthening the existing systems for teacher training at the workplace and before employment;

(c) Using new teaching methods and techniques to provide inclusive education and high quality classes in mathematics and the mother tongue.

126. Profession-based segregation is also present in the reporting period regarding so-called male and female jobs. In secondary vocational education, girls prevail in the following professions: personal services; healthcare; textile and leather-related jobs; economic/legal and sales professions; while the boys prevail in the following professions: mechanical; electro-technical; construction and surveying; geological-mining and metallurgy. A similar condition is seen in higher education.

127. In preschool education, 95% of the employees are women, while 75% of teachers in primary education are women as well. A large percentage of the principals of primary and secondary schools are women, who are also more prevalent as employees in the education sector.

128. In 2015, MES has undertaken measures that enable mobility in education (accommodation, transportation and financial resources), in order to choose the type of education according to the interests and not according to the place of residence. Also, efforts for flexible education avenues were made, thus creating a range of benefits for the female population. The development of partnership between the education sector and the labour market was advocated, in order to avoid profession-based segregation and the current representation of the female population in "traditional" professions.

129. The new concept of compulsory nine-year primary education continuously contributes to the initial level of knowledge of all involved students; this is very important for the students in the rural areas, for those belonging to the ethnic groups and especially for the girls from these groups.

130. Compulsory secondary education shows results, taking into account the benefits as well such as free-of-charge transportation, accommodation in dormitories and free-of-charge books. The Conditional Cash Assistance (CCA) for secondary education has also contributed to the achieved results. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia through MLSP implements that program, which is intended for students who are of secondary education age, who regularly attend high school classes and who are members of a household beneficiary of social welfare (SW). The conditional cash assistance is paid to the mother of the student, except in cases when the mother is unavailable to receive such payment (if she resides abroad, if she is deceased, and so on). In case the mother is unavailable to receive the payment, CCA is paid out to the beneficiary of the right to SW.

131. Pursuant to the obligations of the State Statistical Office to process statistical data, at the end of the 2014/2015 school year, the number of students in regular primary schools was 188,361, out of which 91,137 were girls. This number represented a decrease of 1.1% compared to the previous school year. The number of students who attended the classes conducted in the Macedonian language was 120,716, out of which 58,877 were girls. The number of students who attend the classes conducted in the Albanian language was 61,608, out of which 29,589 were girls. The data on finished education show that something less than 50% of the students who finish school were girls.

132. At the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year, the number of students in regular primary schools was 185,992, which showed a decrease of 3.2% compared to the previous school year.

133. The number of students in regular secondary schools at the end of the 2014/2015 school year was 81,788, out of which 39,533 were girls, which showed a decrease of 3.6% compared to the previous school year. At the beginning of the 2015/216 school year, the number of students in regular secondary schools was 80,295, which showed a decrease of 3.9% compared to the previous school year. 54,858 students attended the classes conducted in the Macedonian language, out of which 26,767 were girls, while 23,308 students attended the classes conducted in the Albanian language, out of which 11,024 were girls.

134. Of those finishing their education:

(a) 1st year — 19,176 students, of which 9,450 were girls;

(b) 2nd year — 19,702 students, of which 9,579 were girls;

(c) 3rd year — 19,827 students, of which 9,769 were girls;

(d) 4th year — 20,185 students, of which 10,093 were girls;

(e) This means that in the 4th year, 50% of the students who finished their education were girls;

(f) The number of students who repeated a class was 562, of which 139 were girls.

135. The data on the number of students who dropped out of school is the following:

(a) In the 2012/2013 school year, 195 girls and 179 boys dropped out of primary school; 222 girls and 404 boys dropped out of secondary school;

(b) In the 2013/2014 school year, 286 girls and 312 boys dropped out of primary school; 226 girls and 382 boys dropped out of secondary school.[34]

136. According to the State Statistical Office's data, obtained on the basis of the received reports, in Macedonia in the 2015/2016 school year, 59,865 university students were enrolled, which is an increase of 0.9% compared to the 2014/2015school year. The number of enrolled female students was 32,837, or 54.9%. The highest number of students (86.8%) enrolled in state institutions of higher education, while 12.8% enrolled in private institutions of higher education. In the first year of studies, in the 2015/2016 academic year, 17,952 students enrolled, i.e. 30% (it also includes students who enrolled in the first year of studies for the second or third time, or more times).

137. In 2015, 246 people acquired the Ph.D title, which showed an increase of 19.4% compared to 2014. Most individual got their Ph.D in the social sciences — 29.3%; then in medicine — 25.2%; followed by technical-technological sciences — 21.1%; and the rest of the individuals got their Ph.D in the field of humanities, biotechnical sciences, natural sciences and mathematics. The number of women who defended their doctoral dissertations in 2015 was 143 candidates, which was 58.1% of the individuals who got their Ph.D in 2015.

138. MLSP, together with the Roma Educational Fund (REF), implements the project "Inclusion of Roma Children in Public Municipal Institutions — Kindergartens "(IRCPMI) for ten consecutive years. In all the years of implementation of the project, it involved 3,500 Roma children, out of which 82%

[34] *Women and Men in Macedonia*, Skopje, 2015.

enrolled in primary school. During the 2014/2015 school year, the project involved 630 preschool children, and in the 2015/2016 school year, it involved 650 Roma children in 19 municipalities in the country. Activities with NGOs, parents and kindergartens are implemented within the project for additional motivation of the parents to send their children to kindergarten. Topics intended for the parents of that community are covered in order to raise awareness among parents, to improve the developmental, educational and upbringing skills of the parents, and activities to improve the cooperation and communication between childcare institutions and the parents of the children.

139. The increase of interaction, understanding and integration in school was the goal of the project named "Building Bridges "implemented by MES in cooperation with the Swiss Embassy and the Skopje OSCE Mission in 2014 and 2015. This project offered support for the municipalities, students, teachers, parents and schools to facilitate access to grants for multilingual schools or paired monolingual schools, in order to organize joint activities with students from different communities who attend classes conducted in different languages.

140. At the beginning of every school year and during the months of August and September, MES, via its Administration for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of Persons Belonging to the Communities, in cooperation with Roma NGOs and RIC, organizes a public awareness campaign to inform the Roma population about enrolling their children in the first grade of primary school and the first year of secondary school. This awareness campaign is organized via informative workshops and direct visit to Roma families in their homes. The aim is to raise awareness of parents by means of information and assistance in enrolling their children in primary and secondary school.

141. In 2015, upon the initiative of MLSP, the said Commission reviewed the medical documentation of children attending special schools in the country. This review included all primary and secondary special schools in Macedonia. Following the review, a recategorization of Roma children was made. Appropriate measures will be conducted in the forthcoming period in order to integrate these children into regular classes.

142. The Project "30/35 ", which was launched in the 2014/2015 academic year, is intended for finishing university education (under more flexible conditions, shortened curricula, and with opportunity for retraining) for those individuals who were unable to finish it for whatever reason. Most of the students in this Project are women whose lowest age for enrolling is 30 years (as they very often have interrupted their studies due to pregnancy, obligations towards children/elderly persons, etc.).

Article 11

Reply to Recommendation No. 32 (a), (b) and (c)

143. Economic growth in the reporting period was accompanied by a rise in employment and reductions in the unemployment and poverty rates. In the period from 2009 to 2014, the number of employed persons grew by 2.1% on average annually, thus decreasing the unemployment rate to 28% in 2014. Despite this progress, unemployment remains a serious challenge for Macedonia.

144. According to the Strategy on Gender Equality, UN-Women in cooperation with MLSP has started implementing a representative study with field interviews of 2,500 households (where every woman in the household would be interviewed) in

order to discover the profounder reasons for the low economic activity by women in the labour market. The study would be a basis for developing further measures to motivate women.

145. In order to increase employment, job quality and productivity, with special focus on the vulnerable groups of the population, the Republic of Macedonia has enacted the 2016-2020 National Employment Strategy. The goals of this Strategy are: increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of employment policy, with special support to the vulnerable categories of the population; improving the capacity of the private sector for creating jobs; and tailoring education to provide knowledge and skills that fit the needs of the employers.

146. This Strategy includes gender mainstreaming, pointing out gender differences in the labour market. The gender pay gap between men and women (assuming they have the same level of education, same work experience, and they work in the same sector, profession and so on) is 17.5%.[35] The gap is highest in the industry sector and traditional services.

147. The operational plans made annually provide a comprehensive framework for the introduction of employment services related to the labour market and the programs for employment and encouraging employability funded by the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance — IPA, the World Bank, UNDP, USAID and so on, which enables more effective coordination, better monitoring and greater impact of the programs.

148. The operational programs are implemented through a series of programs in which gender mainstreaming is integrated. The Program for financial support of legal entities (micro and small enterprises, and craftsmen) is intended for creating new jobs, aiming to decrease unemployment and to create new jobs, as well as to stimulate labour demand in the labour market. The program is implemented by providing a grant-in-aid in the form of equipment and materials (MKD 92,000.00) to support the creation of new full time jobs in successful and innovative micro and small enterprises and for craftsmen who have been registered for at least one year. The employer who hires an employee by means of this program has an obligation to keep him for at least 12 months from the day of establishing registered full time employment. In the period from 1 March 2013 to the end of 2016, 492 unemployed persons were employed by the program (2013: 100; 2014:119; 2015:126; 2016:147), out of which 265, or 53.86%, were women (2013:42; 2014:67; 2015:79; 2016:77). Of the total number of employed persons, 127, or 25.81%, were young women under 29 years of age (2013:42; 2014:28; 2015:31; 2016:26). From the number of employed women (262) in the last 4 years, it is evident that the program contributes to improved employment of women.

149. The self-employment program aims to support unemployed persons in establishing their own companies, in formalizing the existing (informal) activity and in creating additional jobs. The Program is implemented at national level. Support with non-refundable funds is provided for the implementation of all self-employment. The unemployed persons who apply for a grant for the first time have the priority to enter the program. In the period from1 March 2013 to the end of 2015, 2,817 unemployed persons (2013:930; 2014:940; 2015:946, out of which 333 were women) registered their own business and employed themselves with the support of this program, of which 34.69%, or 977 (2013:306; 2014:338; 2015:333) were women. Of the total number, 33.59%, or 946 (2013:341; 2014:327; 2015:278)

[35] Arandarenko, M., Vujic, S. and Vladisavljevic, M. (2013). Gender pay gap in Western Balkans: evidence from Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. Foundation for Advancement of Economics, Belgrade.

were young people up to 29 years of age, of which 339 (2013:117; 2014:116; 2015:106) were women, while 607 (2013:224; 2014:211; 2015:172) were men. The total number of Roma who registered their own business is 37, of which 8 are women and 29 are men. In 2016, as of 10 November 2016, 828 new businesses were registered (346 by women), of which 11 were registered by Roma (3 by Roma women). With the support of the program, 190 additional persons were employed (2014:110; 2015:80), of which 87 (2014:55; 2015:32) were women. The total number of Roma who registered their own business is 48, of which 11 are women and 37 are men. The analysis showed that the activity rate (survival) of the companies supported by the self-employment program in 2013 and 2014 was 97.3%: 97.9% for the men and 96.3% for the women entrepreneurs. It is obvious that given the implemented number of businesses registered by women (1,323) in the reporting period as of 10 November 2016 and given the 87 additional employed women (as of 2015), that the self-employment program has had an effect on the employment of women.

150. Through the "Education for starting a business "measure, training is provided in order to acquire certain knowledge and skills to start a private business. The training addresses the issues related to the implementation of the business idea, business plan preparation, access to information on running a business, financing resources, procedures for registration of a company, legislation and so on. The employees of the employment centres carry out the training. In the period from 1 March 2013 to the end of 2014, 2,406 unemployed persons were included in this activity, of which 41.6% (1,001) were women. Of the total number of people (2,406), 32.92% (792) were young people under the age of 29, while 107 were Roma. In 2015 and 2016, the training was not implemented because it was not provided for in the Operating Plan. By participating in the trainings, the women improved their skills and knowledge to start and run their own business.

151. In context of the Program for community work in the municipality, social inclusion of people who have difficulties in entering the labour market is provided by acquiring certain skills and by their gradual inclusion in the labour market. Within six months, the registered unemployed persons were engaged in part-time jobs (20 hours per week). The people who are hired through the program provide services for the needs of the citizens from the local community while gaining experience and professional skills, which will improve their employability in the future. Moreover, the program contributes to increasing the supply of social services in accordance with the needs of the local community. In the period from 1 March 2013 to the end of 2015, out of 518 unemployed persons who were hired in the program, 74.52% (386) were women. As of 31 October 2016, the program involved 229 unemployed persons, of which 179 were women. The women, who are in the category of people that enter the labour market with greater difficulty, improve their employability by participating in the program.

152. In context of the measure "On-the-job-training with subsidized employment ", the aim is to acquire professional knowledge and skills to perform the working tasks and to encourage employment of registered unemployed individuals who enter the labour market with greater difficulty (vulnerable categories of unemployed persons). In 2015, the measure encompassed 466 persons, of which 256 (54.9%) were women. Of them, 250 women finished the training and signed a subsidized contract. In 2016, 252 persons, of which 104 (41.27%) were women, signed a contract for training as part of this measure.

153. In 2016, training for drivers of categories C and E was conducted. The aim was to improve the employability of the registered unemployed persons through the acquisition of skills in accordance with the requirements of the professions related to bus and truck driving and the expressed needs for labour in this industry and their

employability. A total of 367 people, 6 of which were women, signed up to participate in the training.

154. With regard to the participation of the Roma people in the active programs and employment measures, the situation in the reporting period is as follows:

(a) With regard to the self-employment program:

(i) In 2013, 76 Roma persons applied, of which 64 persons completed the questionnaire; of these persons, 17 were referred to training and 11 Roma persons finished it, while grants were approved (contracts were signed) to 8 Roma persons (1 Roma woman);

(ii) In 2014, contracts were signed with 17 Roma persons (4 Roma women);

(iii) In 2015, 55 Roma candidates signed up; 43 of them completed the questionnaire, while 12 Roma persons (3 Roma women) signed a contract;

(iv) As of 10 November 2016, 11 Roma persons (3 Roma women) signed a contract.

(b) Regarding the program for subsidizing employment:

(i) In 2013, 91 Roma persons applied, while 13 Roma persons (4 Roma women) were employed;

(ii) In 2014, 87 Roma persons applied, while contracts were signed with 11 Roma persons (3 Roma women).

(c) Regarding the measure for training to meet the professions demanded in the labour market:

(i) In 2013, 30 Roma persons applied, while 14 Roma persons went through the trainings and finished them;

(ii) In 2014, 61 Roma persons applied, contracts for training were signed with 25 people, and 17 Roma persons went through the trainings and finished them;

(iii) In 2015, 20 Roma persons applied;

(iv) As of 30 September 2016, 39 Roma persons had applied, while 7 persons were included.

(d) Training to meet the professions demanded in the labour market (for deaf and blind persons) would provide for acquisition of skills and knowledge for professions demanded in the labour marker such as:

(i) Massage therapist, orientation and mobility in space, and literacy in Braille for the blind;

(ii) Argon welder and plumber for deaf persons;

(iii) In context of the implementation of this program, as of 30 September 2016, 6 Roma people had applied and 4 of them were included.

(e) As of 30 September 2016, in the context of the program "Training for basic employment skills "(foreign languages and computers), 35 Roma applied, of which 8 persons applied for training in basic computer skills, and 27 of them applied for training in foreign languages; 3 Roma persons finished the trainings.

(f) Regarding the measure for training with known employers:

(i) In 2014, contracts were signed with 10 Roma persons;

(ii) In 2015, 11 Roma persons signed up, and contracts were signed with 2 Roma persons;

(iii) As at 30 September 2016, 7 Roma persons had signed up, and contracts were signed with 4 Roma persons.

(g) Regarding the measure for training with known employers with subsidized employment:

(i) In 2014, contracts were signed with 2 Roma persons (1 Roma women);

(ii) In 2015, 128 Roma persons applied, of which 7 Roma persons (3 Roma women) signed a contract;

(iii) As of 30 September 2016, 17 Roma persons had signed up, and 3 Roma persons (2 Roma women) signed a contract.

(h) Regarding the measure on practical work (internships):

(i) In 2013, 13 Roma persons signed up, and contracts were signed with 2 of them;

(ii) In 2014, 12 Roma persons signed up, and no contracts were signed;

(iii) In 2015, 26 Roma persons signed up, and contracts were signed with 8 of them (3 Roma women);

(iv) As of 30 September 2016, 12 Roma persons had applied, while 7 persons were included (2 were Roma women).

(v) In 2014, a special Pilot Program for the Employment of Persons Belonging to the Roma Ethnic Community was introduced, and it included 4 coaches and 2 mentors. A meeting as part the Program was held with 777 Roma persons, of which 302 were interested in further familiarization with the employment programs. Of those, 124 took specific action towards improving their socioeconomic status and quality of life, while 43 of them were successfully included in some of the active employment measures.

155. In the reporting period, the Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship implemented the Program to Support Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Competitiveness of SMEs. In 2013, methodology and a questionnaire for women were prepared as part this Program, in order to obtain relevant information about the needs of trainings they have in their companies. A survey was conducted in 200 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) run by women entrepreneurs and an analysis was drafted based on the results obtained by the survey. A survey of 200 MSMEs run by women was conducted in the territory of the whole country. Based on the analyses, their training needs were specified. The training needs of the management are: organization and management; leadership and motivation; and finance and accounting. The training needs of the employees relate to the improvement of production, marketing, services and sales, as well as the use of computer technology, quality management and human resources management.

156. The Ministry of Economy involves women in the labour market with financial support for female entrepreneurship. In that regard, in 2015, 15 out of 26 applications for subsidizing female entrepreneurship met the requirements, and the Ministry signed a contract with them to subsidize the costs. The Ministry started an activity to provide a donor who would fund the drafting of a strategy for female entrepreneurship. The Ministry is involved in the project "Female entrepreneurship — power engine of creating jobs in Southeast Europe "financed by the Swedish Development Agency in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council and the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning.

157. In the reporting period, the Agency for Entrepreneurship implemented 8 trainings for 230 women entrepreneurs and a workshop as part of European SME Week on female and social entrepreneurship in order to support the female entrepreneurship as a key factor in reducing the unemployment. As a result, the skills for running a business were improved through gaining knowledge of different areas, exchange of experiences with women managers of existing enterprises, encouraging women to start their own business as self-employment, and economic empowerment of women in the society.

158. As part of the project "Platform for Gender Equality "funded by the European Union through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), in 2014 and 2015, "Reactor — Research in Action ", together with the Platform for Gender Equality and MLSP, conducted activities to support the implementation of the 2013-2020 Strategy for Gender Equality. Two computer-assisted telephone surveys of representative samples of 1,245 and 1,288 respondents were conducted within this project. These studies were used to create a database of trends in the labour market from a gender mainstreaming point of view. Additionally, the study "Working conditions and balance between work and private life: Gender analyses "resulted from this research, which provides an alternative picture about the situation in the labour market, including the number of women that work.

159. According to the data obtained from the research "Women in the labour market: Stereotypes and challenges ", organized by FINANCE THINK and the Institute for Economic Research and Policies in Skopje, the percentage of the gender gap varies according to the economic sectors and education, age and profession. The gap is widest in the agricultural sector, where women earn 31% less than men do, while the gap is smallest in the financial sector where women earn 1% less than men do. Regarding the education of the workers, the gap is highest for those with primary school education — up to 24.2% lower salaries, while it is lowest for those with higher education — 10.1%. The gap is greater among women and men over the age of 29 (11.9%) than for men and women under the age of 30 (3.2%).

160. The State Labor Inspectorate (SLI)[36] is continuously trained to recognize and tackle discrimination in the workplace on grounds of gender, and especially to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Labor Law which relate to discrimination. They are also trained to implement the provisions from the Law on Protection from Harassment in the Workplace. Trade union authorities also protect the rights of women workers, providing representation in court and legal advice.

Article 12

Reply to Recommendation No. 34 (a), (b) and (c)

161. Annually, the Ministry of Health prepares and implements healthcare programs that offer a variety of health services to citizens. In addition to programs relating to the health of all citizens, programs that specifically relate to women are also implemented. One of those programs is a program for active health care of mothers and children in Macedonia. The purpose of this program is to improve the health of children and women in the reproductive period aimed at reducing infant and maternal mortality. Special focus is given to the vulnerable groups of the

[36] Responsible for inspection of the implementation of labour laws, employment, health and safety at work; collective agreements; contracts and other acts that regulate and enforce the rights, obligations and responsibilities of workers and employers in the field of labor relations and health and safety at work.

population where attention is paid to equal access to services of all those who need it. In 2016, an evaluation of the existing 2010-2020 National Reproduction Health Strategy (RHS) was conducted in order to comply with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global and regional initiatives connected to this field. An assessment of the programs for screening for breast and cervical cancer was conducted and a range of activities was offered. An internationally recognized methodology based on evidence for developing RHS clinical guidelines has been implemented. The government is presently making efforts for adopting a regulatory framework for this process to be formalized. The first pilot guideline is the guideline on postpartum haemorrhage, as it is number one cause of maternal mortality. The guideline is in the process of formal adoption and the modality of its implementation is being defined.

162. The promotion of the need to choose one's preferred gynaecologist was achieved by organizing workshops for training and education of the visiting nurses for working in rural areas. These activities included women in the whole territory of the country between the ages of 15 to 49, and as a result, in 2014, 409 women chose their preferred primary healthcare gynaecologist according to the action plan for greater coverage of women in rural areas. In 2015, a donation from UNPFA for MH of two mobile gynaecological clinics was secured for providing RHS and GBV services for women/girls refugees/migrants in the two transit centres. The mobile clinics are operated by the NGO "HERA", and as of June 2016, the mobile gynaecological clinics provided RHS services to around 350 women. In addition, packages and equipment for reproductive health were provided for the mobile clinics as well as for the hospitals on the refugee route, and a protocol for the operation of the mobile clinics and instructions for syndromic treatment of sexually transmitted infections were drafted.

163. In 2013, with the support of UNFPA, an assessment of 30% of the maternity wards in hospitals was made, while in 2014 an assessment was made of maternity wards in all hospitals. In 2015, an action plan was drafted based on the assessment, while it was positively evaluated by the Committee for Safe Motherhood and the MH. The drafting of the plan to implement the activities of the action plan is underway. Initial steps for implementing the methodology of WHO on mother mortality and morbidity "Beyond the numbers" were taken. In 2014, a mapping of the vulnerable categories of women was made as a precondition for implementing this activity in order to target the most vulnerable people, for which a report was made in April 2014 called "Identification of vulnerable categories of women as beneficiaries of free antenatal care".

164. MH and the Institute of Public Health undertook several measures. At the end of 2013, MH finalized the curriculum for continuous health education on family planning for general practitioners, gynaecologists, visiting nurses, medical students, and specialists in gynaecology and obstetrics. These programs were accredited by the Center for Family Medicine and verified by an international curriculum institution. The implementation of the programs contributed to improving equal access and quality of health services in the field of family planning.

165. Training for 10 trainers for continuous medical education on family planning was implemented in the context of these programs. Training packages for family planning for the trainers and a handbook for family planning were prepared for this purpose.[37] These trainings included 40% of the health workers and providers of

[37] http://hera.org.mk/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%98%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5.

family planning services. In 2014, 19 trainers for family planning were accredited. In 2015, 10 trainings for family planning were conducted that included 190 family doctors. In addition, 18 visiting nurses and 12 Roma health mediators were included in training for family planning.

166. For equal access and quality of the healthcare services in the period of pregnancy with special focus on vulnerable groups and in the period of childbirth, an assessment on the condition of the emergency obstetrics and infant care was made. MH provided free healthcare for the pregnant women during the antenatal period, for insured as well as for the uninsured and vulnerable categories of pregnant women, including the Roma women as one of the most vulnerable groups. All the other diagnostic and laboratory examinations, as well as the act of giving birth, are included in these check-ups. Also, free supplementation of folic acid and iodine supplements for every pregnant woman in every maternity hospital in the country is provided.

167. In 2013, a study on the market segmentation for contraceptives was made, with budget projections for free coverage of vulnerable categories. Considering the difficulties regarding the access to health care that the vulnerable groups face, in the reporting period, attention was focused on educating the families in rural areas and Roma communities to improve the health and development of children, immunization, safe motherhood, and adolescent health by RIM and the community-health nursing. In the absence of a local office of a gynaecologist, a team made up of a gynaecologist and female obstetrician or nurse conduct medical examination of Roma women who are in the reproductive period three times per week throughout the year in the clinic in Shuto Orizari.

168. Annually, 10 trainings are held in order to raise awareness of the importance that every woman should have a preferred primary healthcare gynaecologist. In 2015, a campaign for rising awareness of sexual and reproductive health was conducted. That was followed by preparing health promotional material on contraception, family planning, getting contraceptives and organizing a campaign for raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health. Counselling offices on sexual and reproductive health continuously work in the centres for public health. Clinical guidelines have been drafted for quality implementation of health services in the field of sexual and reproductive health. In addition, as part of strengthening the preparation of MH for responding to crisis situations and disasters, healthcare and other stakeholders were trained in the Minimum Basic Package of Services (MBPS) for RHS from 2013 to 2016. 121 representatives from MH, MLSP, MoI, CMC, NGOs and other organizations were trained in the past three years.

169. The integration of gender mainstreaming in all healthcare policies and interventions was followed by 10 workshops for the healthcare workers in 10 centres for public health, and research on gender-based violence in healthcare was conducted. Also, software for registers and data analysis disaggregated by gender have been drafted.

170. The Institute of Public Health, in cooperation with the 10 centres for public health opened counselling offices on sexual and reproductive health for young people. Ten counselling offices were opened in the period from 2013 to 2015, distributing 17,148 condoms and 3,315 packs of lubricant in the reporting period.

171. A campaign for raising awareness about sexual and reproductive health was conducted. For this purpose, healthcare promotional material on contraception and family planning was prepared. In the period from 2013 to the end of the first quarter of 2016, 714 flyers were prepared and distributed.

172. The Institute of Public Health and the Center for Psychosocial and Crisis Situations conducted research on the behaviours connected to health in school-aged children (HBSC 2014/2015), involving 4,218 students at the ages of 11, 13 and 15. The research showed that 44% of the students at the age of 15 have high quality (sound) communication with the family; 22% of children at the age of 11 are overweight and have obesity problems; 11% of students at the age of 11 are irritable more than once a week; only 35% of students at the age of 11 have good physical activity twice a week; 7% of the students aged 15 smoke cigarettes every day.

173. The Institute of Public Health and the 10 centres for public health continuously conduct trainings in health institutions in the field of health statistics and in keeping records according to gender. Also, the capacities of the health workers are improved through workshops regarding the integration of gender mainstreaming in healthcare interventions.

174. In the context of the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, MH and CSOs started the implementation of the project "Roma Health Mediators" in 2010. This project is still implemented and aims to overcome the obstacles in communication between the Roma population and healthcare workers, to identify the persons and families who have no access to healthcare by making field visits to inform them of the accessibility to healthcare, healthcare insurance and free healthcare services provided in the preventive and curative programs of MH, and to improve the health status of the Roma population.

175. In 2012, 15 healthcare mediators in eight municipalities with predominantly Roma populations started working, including: 2 mediators in the Municipality of Shuto Orizari, 2 in the Municipality of Karposh, 2 in the Municipality of Tetovo, 2 in the Municipality of Gostivar, 2 in the Municipality of Bitola, 1 in the Municipality of Prilep, 2 in the Municipality of Kochani, and 3 mediators in the Municipality of Shtip. The healthcare mediators are located in local healthcare centres of the aforementioned municipalities, in order to be easily accessible to the population and healthcare workers.

Article 13

Reply to Recommendation No. 38 (a) and (c)

176. Social care is accomplished through a system of measures, activities and policies for preventing and overcoming the fundamental social risks to which the vulnerable categories are exposed during their lives, for reducing poverty and social exclusion and for strengthening the capacity for personal social care. Activities are implemented to improve the social care of citizens, to improve services and to improve social prevention quality in the field of social care.

177. According to the Law on Social Care, a person capable of work and capable of maintaining a household, who is financially insecure and who, pursuant to other regulations, cannot provide himself/herself with means of subsistence has the right to social welfare. Most of them are beneficiaries of social welfare. According to data from the Statistical Office:

(a) Adult beneficiaries of SW:

Socially excluded total 2,653 women 1,175

Financially insecure total 3,299 women 1,581

(b) Beneficiaries of SW as head of household:

2015 total 28,018 women 7,195

2014 total 34,507 women 8,947

(c) Total number of household members:

2015 total 106,230 women 49,808

2014 total 128,679 women 60,253

178. In the reporting period, solving the problems relating to the housing of vulnerable groups was done by assigning social apartments. At the national level, such apartments were assigned to people who belong to one of the 7 categories below:

(a) children without parents and parental care;

(b) beneficiaries of social welfare or constant financial assistance;

(c) people affected by natural disaster;

(d) disabled persons;

(e) persons belonging to the Roma community;

(f) single parents;

(g) blind people.

179. Persons who are classified in one of these 7 categories and who meet the conditions published in the notice for awarding social housing in many towns in the country got an apartment no matter whether they were men or women.

180. The project for housing of vulnerable social groups is partly financed by funds from a loan of €25,350,000 from the Council of Europe Development Bank [38] and by funds in the amount of €25,350,000 from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia, required for the construction of 1,741 social apartments in 33 residential buildings in 26 towns in the country.

181. In the period from 26 November 2015 to July 2016, the project "Free blueprints for tract houses "was implemented in order to reduce the costs of building and to reduce the period to obtain a building permit. This project equally values men and women in the construction industry.

182. Since the beginning, the primary aims of the project of the Horizons Foundation in Macedonia were to secure access to financial services (microcredit to entrepreneurs in this country) and to create self-sustaining micro-finance institutions. Clients of microcredit organizations are usually people with low monthly incomes and low social status who do not have access to formal financial institutions. Clients are usually self-employed and most often home-based entrepreneurs, while the whole family is included in the business. In most of the cases, the income of this small family business is the only income of the family and covers all the expenses and investments in the household.

183. In urban areas, the clients are retailers, farmer's market salespersons, street traders, artisans, and those involved in small-scale services, small-scale production and the like. In rural areas, the clients usually are small-scale farmers, individual farmers who produce food by themselves from plants and animals, such as: milkmen, plowmen, pre-seasonal vegetable farmers, etc. What is characteristic for both categories is their vulnerability to environmental changes, which makes their income unstable and their business unsustainable.

[38] According to the Loan Agreement F/P 1674 (2009).

184. The program of "Horizons "pays special attention to women entrepreneurs and their involvement in decision making-related to their businesses or their families. Until now, "Horizons "has serviced more than 10,000 clients and paid over 30,000 loans through 8 branch offices throughout Macedonia.

Article 14

Reply to Recommendations No. 32 (b) and No. 38 (a)

185. The New Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia was adopted for the period of 2014 to 2020, as a document that is part of the public policies of the country, to equalize the level of inclusion and integration of all ethnic communities that live together. The Strategy includes priority areas of employment, education, housing, health and culture. This is due to the fact that, in the period of adopting the first Strategy, many positive developments and changes occurred in the attitude towards the Roma community and the Decade of the Roma.

186. Paying particular attention to Roma women in Macedonia, a 2016-2020 NAP was adopted to strengthen the position of Roma women in society. The purpose of the adoption of this document by the Government is for the women and girls belonging to the Roma community to completely enjoy and practice the human rights relating to gender equality and non-discrimination. The planned activities of this NAP should provide increased access for Roma women to resources and opportunities for their development and participation in economic, social, and culture life; reduce levels of domestic violence against women; reduce the occurrence of marriages/unions between and with minors and their impact on education, health and gender roles.

187. MLSP and the OSCE Mission in Skopje have implemented the project "Legal aid for the Roma community "since 2011 in order to give free legal aid, advice and referrals for people from the Roma community in Macedonia. Mobile legal offices that work and are placed in Roma NGOs have been opened in Skopje, Shtip, Delchevo, Kochani, Vinica, Tetovo and Gostivar. In Skopje, the offices have been opened in settlements with predominantly Roma population, including Shuto Orizari, Topansko Pole, and Zlokukjani. With the support of OSCE, three legal advisors have been hired, who offer free legal aid for the local Roma community through the mobile offices. Four volunteer assistants have been hired for the project, supported by the Ministry: two in Skopje and two covering Gostivar and Tetovo. For this project, MKD 212,200 is earmarked annually from the ministry budget. By 2016, 600 Roma people had contacted the legal offices for legal aid, advices, and referrals.

188. MLSP together with the Commissions for equal opportunities for men and women in the local government units and NGOs, continuously organize public debates and meetings with women in rural areas of Macedonia, in order to familiarize them with national and local policies related to gender equality and equal opportunities. At the same time they are also informed on the needs and benefits of their participation in the creation of politics in their communities, by undertaking certain initiatives to improve or eliminate the problems they encounter.

189. In 2013, as part of IPA Component IV, the project "Strengthening the Capacity for Integration of Women from Rural Environments in the Labor Market, with Special Focus on Women from Ethnic Communities "was implemented. The project objective was to assess the needs of marginalized women, especially women from ethnic minorities, so they may enhance their potential for employment in the labour market. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity and the cooperation

between relevant subjects for integrating marginalized women in the labour market, with special focus on women from ethnic minorities. This project resulted in recommendations in the context of greater attention to the needs of marginalized women and creating employment programs according to their needs, as well as strengthening the existing partnerships at the national and local levels.

190. In 2016, the Municipality of Tetovo, together with the clinical centre in that town, provided free transportation for women from rural environments in the Tetovo region, who wish to undergo breast screening, from their village to the clinical centre. This action was intended for women over 40 years of age and it lasted for a year. To this end, the Municipality has opened a telephone contact line where women can apply for and schedule a screening, at the same time organizing the free transportation to the town clinical centre.

191. During the reporting period, the economic empowerment of women in rural environments belonging to ethnic minorities was conducted by implementing several local projects covering the Polog Region and the northeast plain region, aimed at creating opportunities and conditions for their employment and self-employment.

Part IV

Article 15

192. In context of this Article of the Convention, MLSP refers to the statements in the initial Report of the Republic of Macedonia on CEDAW.

Article 16

Reply to Recommendation No. 40

193. In context of this Article of CEDAW, with regard to the Law on Family and those governing marriage, marital relations and the family, the Republic of Macedonia reported in the Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report of the Republic of Macedonia on the Convention.

194. In accordance with Article 16 of the Law on Family, marriage may not be concluded by a person who has not yet reached 18 years of age. A competent court may, in a non-litigation procedure, allow the conclusion of marriage between a person that is over 16 years of age if the court establishes that the person has reached the physical and mental maturity necessary for performing the rights and duties occurring with marriage, after previously hearing the opinion of a healthcare facility and after a social work centre has provided their expert assistance.

195. In the process of making a decision to issue a permit for such marriage, the court should hear out the underage applicant, his/her parents, i.e. the guardian, and the person who the underage person wishes to marry.

196. The Criminal Code (Article 197) defines the criminal offence of "Extramarital life with a child". Namely, an adult living in an extramarital union with a child who is over 14 years of age, but who has not yet turned 16, will be penalized with a prison sentence from three months up to three years. The same penalty will be imposed on the parent, the adopting parent or the guardian who has enabled a child between 14 and 16 years of age to live in an extramarital union with another person or had induced them to do so. If the act has been committed with the intention to

profit from it, the perpetrator will be then sentenced to one to five years imprisonment.

197. According to the report of the PI Institute for Social Activities, which has been developed on the basis of the data submitted by 30 social work centres in the LIRICUS database, the situation concerning minors who are over 16 years of age, wish to get married and have contacted the social work centres is as follows:

Situation as of	*Minors who are over 16 years of age wishing to get married*
31 December 2013	164
31 December 2014	196
31 December 2015	142
31 July 2016	153

Active files in the LIRICUS database, disaggregated by ethnic affiliation

	16-year old minors wishing to get married	
	Situation as of	
Ethnic affiliation	*31 December 2013*	*31 December 2014*
Macedonians	56	52
Albanians	44	60
Roma	28	38
Turks	22	33
Bosniaks	1	1
Vlachs	0	0
Serbs	1	1
Undeclared	2	2
Other	6	5
Unknown	4	4
Total	**164**	**196**

	Minors who are over 16-years of age wishing to get married	
	Situation as of	
Ethnic affiliation	*31 December 2015*	*31 July 2016*
Macedonians	30	32
Albanians	58	62
Roma	21	24
Turks	19	20
Bosniaks	1	1
Vlachs	0	0
Serbs	1	1
Undeclared	2	2
Other	6	7
Unknown	4	4
Total	**142**	**153**

198. In the context of prevention and raising awareness about the harmful consequences for the health and education of girls, MES proposed the adoption of the Law on Obligatory Secondary School Education, which provides penalties for parents if their underage children do not attend secondary school classes.

199. MLSP has enacted a program for conditional cash assistance for secondary education, according to which beneficiaries may only get social and permanent welfare assistance under the condition that their underage children regularly attend secondary school.

200. When implementing procedures for exercising certain rights, SWCs monitor the situation of vulnerable families and take measures to prevent underage marriages by means of education and informing parents and underage persons of the consequences of illegal marriages involving underage persons.